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#### PSC INVITES PUBLIC COMMENT ON PROPOSED EXTENDED AREA PHONE SERVICE

Public Service Commissioner Bob Anderson invites Great Falls, Dutton and Cascade residents to attend public hearings next week on US West Communications' proposals for telephone extended area service between the three towns. Extended area service expands local calling areas so that customers' phone calls within an EAS region will be local, not long-distance. However, local phone rates in an EAS region must increase to recover EAS costs. US West has proposed three rate alternatives under which EAS, if approved by the PSC, could be provided to include Great Falls, Dutton and Cascade in one local calling area.

The hearings will be held at the following times and locations:

Dutton - Tuesday, October 15, at 7 p.m., Dutton Senior Citizens Center on Main Street;

Great Falls - Wednesday, October 16, at 7 p.m., Great Falls Civic Center, #2 Park Drive South;

Cascade - Thursday, October 17, at 7 p.m., Cascade Community Hall on Front Street South.

US West has proposed three rate options for EAS in the Great Falls region. If the PSC approves EAS, it must choose one of the options, or develop an alternative. Option 1 - Increase local phone rates by \$2.62 per month in all exchanges in the state where EAS is implemented.

Option 2 - Increase local rates based on the total number of lines in the EAS region. Generally, the more lines in a region, the greater the rate increase. Under this option, Great Falls, Dutton and Cascade customers' local phone bills would increase by \$2.10 per month.

Option 3 - Increase local rates in individual exchanges based on the number of additional lines EAS makes available for local calling from those exchanges. Under the four alternatives of this option, the rate increase for Great Falls customers would be smaller than the rate increases for Dutton and Cascade customers. The four alternatives are:

- a) a monthly increase of \$2.36 for Great Falls customers and \$4 for Dutton and Cascade;
- b) a monthly increase of \$2 for Great Falls customers and \$5.65 for Dutton and Cascade;
- c) a monthly increase of \$1.50 for Great Falls customers and \$7.93 for Dutton and Cascade;
- d) a monthly increase of \$1 for Great Falls customers and \$10.19 for Dutton and Cascade.

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